

Application No. 09/818,914
Amendment dated: 17 April 2006
Response to Office Action: March 02, 2006

REMARKS

Claims 1-5, 7-9, 11-16, 18, 20-24, 26, 28, 29, 31-36, 38-46, 48-52, 54-56, 60, and 62-66 are pending for consideration in this application. Claims 1, 2, 7-9, 11-15, 20-23, 26, 35, 54, 60, and 62-64 have been amended. Claims 6, 10, 17, 19, 25, 27, 30, 37, 47, 53, 57, 58, 59 and 61 have been cancelled without prejudice.

Allowable Subject Matter

It is noted with appreciation that claims 24-26, 28, 29, 31-36, 38-46, 48-52, 565 and 66 have been allowed.

Claims 2-4, 8-11, 14, 19, 20 and 23 were objected to as dependent from a rejected claim but indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter recited in claim 14, although the recitation has been revised editorially and to avoid redundant recitations. Claim 14 has been retained but made dependent from claim 2.

Claim 2 has been rewritten in independent form to include the subject matter of claim 1 and includes some editorial revision.

Claim 15 has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 19, while omitting that of intervening claim 18, and is believed to be allowable because claim 19 was rejected only under 35 USC 112 and the grounds of rejection are not applicable to the amended version of claim 15.

Claim 54 has been amended to include the subject matter of dependent claim 55 (indicated in the Office Action to have been allowed).

Allowed claims 35, 60 and 62 have been amended, claim 35 to address issues germane to the rejections of other claims under 35 USC 112; and claims 60 and 62 for consistency with the incorporation of their former parent claim 55 into claim 54.

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Claim Rejections under 35 USC 112

Claims 8, 19, 26, 63 and 64 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph. Appropriate amendment has been made to the recitation of the subject matter of claim 19, now appearing in claim 15. Allowed claims 35 and 65 also have been amended to address similar issues. Claims 8, 15, 26, 35, 63, 64 and 65 as amended are believed free from this ground of rejection, withdrawal of which is requested, and to be in condition for allowance.

Rejections under 35 USC 103

Claims 1, 5, 7, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 22 and 54 were rejected under 35 USC 103. While not conceding that the grounds of rejection are proper, Applicants have chosen to expedite prosecution on the basis of claims indicated in the Office Action to contain allowable or to contain allowable subject matter and the rejections under 35 USC 103 now are believed to be moot.

Other Claim Amendments

Claims 12-14, 60, 62 and 63 have been amended to update their dependencies. Claims 9, 11, 20, 21 and 23 have been amended to correspond with antecedent recitations in their parent claims. Claim 7 has been amended to remove a limitation not required for its allowability.

CONCLUSION

It is believed this amendment and response have addressed all grounds of rejection contained in the Office Action and has placed all pending claims in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable consideration and early allowance of the application are respectfully solicited. If there are any remaining issues that could be resolved by discussion, a telephone call to the undersigned attorney at (425) 402-4638 would be appreciated.

Date: April 17, 2006
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Respectfully submitted,



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